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Reading Round-Up, 2/27/2011

February 27, 2011 in [The Five-List Plan](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [Permalink](#)

- Guest-blogging for James Fallows last week, Jeremiah Jenne devoted several of his posts to discussions of protests and the possibility of a “Jasmine Revolution” in China. His columns on this topic include “[China: Not Quite a Revolution](#),” “[After Protests, Beijing Cracks Down](#),” and “[In China, Droughts Bring the Crazy](#).” Jenne also provided [on-the-spot reporting](#) today from Wangfujing in Beijing, the site of a planned protest that was primarily attended by security forces and foreign journalists.

- Tom Lasseret of McClatchy Newspapers writes at his “[China Rises](#)” blog of the juxtaposition of the crackdown on protests with the message of an online forum held Sunday morning by Wen Jiabao:

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Sunday held an online forum in which he promised to focus on making the lives of ordinary people in China more comfortable and secure.

Just a few hours later, thousands of Chinese police deployed in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities to clamp down on public gatherings after a second week of overseas Internet-based calls for protests across the country.

The combination of Wen’s comments about government efforts to raise living standards, accompanied by a display of China’s police state tactics aimed at squelching dissent, neatly laid out in one day’s time the Chinese Communist Party’s approach toward avoiding the kind of unrest seen across the Arab world.

In the morning, Wen pushed the official position of more stability and prosperity through one party rule. And in the afternoon, security personnel swarmed public spaces to be sure nobody suggested otherwise.

- In the wake of Best Buy’s announcement that it has shuttered its branded stores in China, Adam Minter of Shanghai Scrap takes a look at [what went wrong](#).

- At Miller-McCune, Jeff Wasserstrom writes about “[Media and Revolution 2.0: Tiananmen to Tahrir](#)”:

Have the latest advances in communication technology radically altered the fundamental dynamics of struggles for change in authoritarian settings? Or have cell phones and social media merely brought about small shifts in the dynamics of revolution? Is the Web a godsend to those trapped in oppressive states, as Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo suggests in his essay “The Internet is God’s Gift to China”? Or does this thinking give in to a form of “cyber-utopianism” that glosses over the potential of new media to be used by autocrats, their propaganda ministries and security forces to massage public opinion, keep tabs on dissidents and ensure that populations stay docile and distracted, as Evgeny Morozov argues in *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*?

- Maura Cunningham reviews Pallavi Aiyar’s new novel, *Chinese Whiskers*, at the [Asian Review of Books](#).